

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1114

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government Operations & Accountability

Title: An act relating to length of candidates' statements.

Brief Description: Allowing longer candidates' statements on the secretary of state's web site.

Sponsors: Representatives Tom, Springer, Jarrett, Haigh, Nixon, Hunter, Priest, Kilmer, Dunn, Anderson and Strow.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government Operations & Accountability: 1/26/05, 2/11/05 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows candidates' statements posted on the web sites of the Secretary of State or county auditors to be up to a maximum of 1,000 words.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ACCOUNTABILITY

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Green, Vice Chair; Nixon, Ranking Minority Member; Clements, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hunt, McDermott, Miloscia, Schindler and Sump.

Staff: Hannah Lidman (786-7291) and Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

The length of candidates' statements in the statewide voters' pamphlet produced by the Office of the Secretary of State is limited to a maximum number of words, depending on the office sought. The limitations are as follows:

100 Words

- state representative

200 Words

- state senator
- superior court judge
- court of appeals judge
- supreme court justice

- all other state offices, except governor

300 Words

- President and vice president
- United States senator
- United States representative
- governor

These limits apply to all candidates' statements whether printed in the statewide voters' pamphlet or posted on the Secretary of State's web site.

By state law, county auditors have the authority to regulate the length of candidates' statements in local voters' pamphlets.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A length limitation of 1,000 words is imposed for candidates' statements posted on the public web sites of the Secretary of State and county auditors. Any increased costs resulting from the increased maximum word limitation for candidates' statements on the Secretary of State's web site must be absorbed within existing funds.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill adds the requirement that the Secretary of State use existing funds to absorb any increased costs resulting from the increased maximum word limit for candidates' statements posted online.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (Original bill) This bill should be passed because an informed electorate is vital to the democracy of Washington. It is important for the committee to note that the bill will have a fiscal impact.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Shane Hamlin, Office of the Secretary of State.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.